

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-34. (cancelled).

35. (Currently Amended) A sterilization container for retaining a surgical component comprising:

a carrier having a storage area at an upper end, the storage area defining an upper surface that retains ~~for retaining~~ a surgical component such that the surgical instrument is accessible to an ambient environment outside the carrier, wherein the storage area defines a hole that receives the surgical instrument such that the surgical instrument extends through the storage area, and the carrier further comprises legs extending downward from the storage area, the legs configured to engage ~~for engaging~~ a carrier system; and

a ~~removable~~ cover removably attached to the storage area of the carrier such that a portion of the surgical instrument is disposed between the cover and the upper surface of the storage area.

36. (Previously presented) The container of claim 35, wherein the cover further comprises an upwardly-extending handle.

37. (Previously presented) The container of claim 35, wherein the surgical component is a bone screw.

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Previously presented) The container of claim 38, wherein the surgical component has a head portion configured to lie at least partially above the hole, and a shaft portion configured to lie at least partially below the hole.

40. (Previously presented) The container of claim 35, wherein the cover has inwardly-extending elements for engaging the storage area of the carrier.

41. (Previously presented) The container of claim 40, wherein the inwardly-extending elements are teeth.

41 42. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 35, wherein the at least one of the legs has a portion that extends ~~extend~~ substantially transverse from the storage area.

42 43. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 35, wherein at least one ~~leg~~ of the legs has a runner.

43 44. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 35, wherein at least one ~~leg~~ of the legs is configured to engage a rail of the carrier system.

[[44]] 45. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 35, wherein the container is configured to be placed next to another container in the carrier system.

45 46. (Currently Amended) A sterilization carrier system comprising:

at least first and second rails;

at least first and second carriers disposed along the first and second rails,

wherein each of the first and second carriers includes a storage area that defines a hole extending therethrough, the holes configured to receive a surgical component; and

first and second removable covers attached to the first and second carriers, respectively so as to cover the holes of the first and second carriers, respectively [;].

~~wherein the first and second carriers are configured to retain a surgical component.~~

46 47. (Currently Amended) The carrier system of claim 45 46, wherein the first carrier has at least one leg configured to be disposed between the first and second rails.

47 48. (Currently Amended) The carrier system of claim 45 46, wherein the first carrier is slidably disposed along the first and second rails.

48 49. (Currently Amended) The carrier system of claim 45 46, wherein the first carrier is retained by the first and second rails.

49 50. (Currently Amended) The carrier system of claim 45 46, further comprising a channel disposed between the first and second rails, ~~and~~ wherein the channel is configured for the surgical component extends into the channel to extend therein.

50 51. (Currently Amended) The carrier system of claim 45 46, wherein the surgical component is a bone screw.

51 52. (Currently Amended) The carrier system of claim 45 46, wherein the first removable cover is removable from the first carrier independent of the second removable cover.